Excerpts from a study on the Economic Impact of the Little (Miami) Trail

The Little Miami Trail is approximately 76 miles long and runs from mid NW Ohio nearly to Cincinnati. In 1999 an economic study of the impact of the trail was commissioned by the Ohio Greenways Initiative. Residents, property owners, business people and realtors were consulted and surveyed by the consultant. The complete study is 34 pages long: I have excerpted some of the key results/responses.

"In recent years, communities, rails-to-trails organizations, and other greenway/bike path groups have been curious about the affects trails have had on the local economy and properties near and adjacent to the trail corridor." This brought about this professional study.

"The residential, business and real estate surveys showed that the trail is considered a valued asset to residential and business interests. Many of those surveyed loved the trail for its beauty, convenience, accessibility and purpose. As an exercise facility, the Little Miami Scenic Trail proves successful and heavily used to improve one's health, even during the 'off season'. A vast amount of people commented on the joy of hearing and watching visitors enjoying the trail. Seeing everyone laughing and talking shows the enjoyment and appreciation of those using the trail."

Economic Findings

Property Values

No property owners felt that the trail detracted from their property values

Residents identified no problems related to the trail

More than half of the respondents felt that the trail had added to their property value

No residents believed that the trail had decreased their property value

84% of respondents felt that living near the trail is better than they had anticipated prior to the construction of the trail

88% felt that the trail had improved the quality of life in their neighborhood

Business Survey

61% of businesses surveyed said that the trail had increased patronage and revenue in their business

About half felt that the trail had increased the value of their business property 78% expressed no problems associated with the trail

Real Estate

Virtually all realtors indicated that close proximity to the trail was considered an asset in selling property

Property on the trail had an increased sales value

Perhaps one of the most important comments in the study was the assertion that this study — which was highly positive towards all aspects of the trail — reflected results comparable to those that had been demonstrated in various trail studies across the country and done by a variety of consultants, government entities or academia. In other words, carefully controlled studies by experts almost always showed positive economic results from the construction of a non-motorized trail.

Heart of Michigan Trail

Connecting Mid Michigan Communities



Heart of Michigan Trail Main

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Trail Benefits

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PROPERTY VALUES

An April 2000 survey of 2,000 recent homebuyers (National Association of Homebuilders and National Association of Realtors) indicated trails were second from the top of the "important to very important" amenity list—behind highway access. According to Gopal Ahluwalia, NAHB Director of Research, trails consistently rank in the top five important amenities in making purchase decisions. (www.nahb.com/news/smartsurvey2002.htm)

Many studies demonstrate the positive role that greenways and trails have on property values. Trails have shown to increase property values, thus increasing local tax revenues. Such increased revenues often offset greenway acquisition costs.

- California's Secretary for the State Resources Agency estimated that \$100 million would be returned to local economies each year from an initial park bond investment of \$330 million (Gilliam, 1980).
- A greenbelt in Boulder, Colorado increased aggregate property values for one neighborhood by \$5.4 million, resulting in \$500,000 additional annual property tax revenues. The tax alone could recover the initial cost of the \$1-5 million greenbelt in three years (Cornell, Lillydahl, and Singel, 1978).
- Omaha (Nebraska) trails are generally perceived by nearby residents as an
 economic benefit. Almost two-thirds of those surveyed felt the trails would increase
 the selling price of their home.

Furthermore, "70% of real estate agents use trails as a selling feature when selling homes near trails. 80.5% of them feel the trail would make it easier to sell." (Sjoquist 2003). On Seattle's most popular trail, homeowners with properties near, but not adjacent to the trail, sold for an average of 6% more than comparable property elsewhere. Additionally, the U.S. National Parks Service notes that increases in property values range from 5 to 32% when adjacent to trails and greenways. It is not uncommon in some western U.S. communities to see "Trail Front Property" advertised in the same way "Lake Front Property" is advertised in Michigan.

Economic Impacts of Trails

Hosted by AmericanTrails.org

Business on the trails, economic impact studies, economic benefits, trails and tourism, valuing trails, and other ways that outdoor recreation and greenways contribute to the economy and livability of communities.

Benefits

The Economic and Social Benefit of Trails in Minnesota

Economic and Social Benefits of Off-Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities, 1992 (pdf 377kb)

Economic Benefits of Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation to Arizona

The Economic Benefits of Trails from Go for Green, Canada (pdf 372kb)

The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space How land conservation helps communities grow smart

Economic Benefits of Greenways: Summary of Findings

The Economic Benefits of Trails (pdf 20kb), from the American Hiking Society

Economic Value of Walkability (pdf 148kb), Victoria Transport Policy Institute

How Cities Use Parks for Economic Development (pdf 392kb)

How cities use parks for community revitalization (pdf 382kb)

Studies

Analysis of Economic Impacts of the Northern Central Rail Trail, Maryland Greenways Commission

Economic Benefits of the Prairie Spirit Trail (pdf 28 kb)

Forest Recreation's Growing Impact

Heritage Rail Trail County Park User Survey and Economic Impact Analysis (pdf 192 kb)

Little Miami Scenic Trail Economic Study (Word 540 kb)

Maximizing Economic Benefits from a Rails-to-Trails Project, case study of the Greenbrier River Trail, WV

Economic Impact Analysis: Trans Canada Trail in Ontario (pdf 1.6 mb)

Nordic Ski Trail Easements and Property Values

The National Park Service Resource Book on Economic Values of Greenways, Trails, and River Protection

Off-Highway Vehicle economic impacts in New Hampshire

Economic impacts of bike tourism in Colorado The Virginia Creeper Trail Economic Impact Analysis

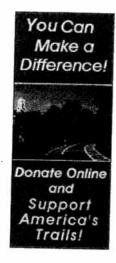
The Washington & Old Dominion Trail Economic Impact Analysis

New River State Park trails Economic Impact Analysis

For more on training opportunities for trail design, construction, and management, see the National Trails
Training Partnership area.

More resources:

Bibliography
Quotations
Glossary
Acronyms
Tools
Products & services



Business

Implementing Trail-Based Economic Development Programs: A Handbook for Iowa Communities

Economic and other benefits of the Heritage Rail Trail

Many photos and examples of business along the Longleaf Trace in Mississippi

How's business on the Katy Trail? Entrepreneurs see opportunities

Host Towns Agree: Cyclists are a Bonanza How Methow Valley grew an economy

o you find the resources on our website valuable? Then please join American Trails today to support the work we do to keep you on the cutting-edge!

Join online now!

Valuing trails

A Contingent Trip Model for Estimating Rail-trail Demand, USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station

What's a Trail Really Worth? looking at the range of economic impacts

Trails expenditures shown to reduce health-care costs

Park Trail Usage Patterns and Public Sentiment Toward Maintenance and Operation Cost of the East Bay Regional Park District Trail System

Railtrails and special events: community and economic benefits

Documenting economic and community benefits of trails

Tourism